

Remarks

As is apparent from the "Response to Arguments" section of the last Office Action, the claim rejections are premised on the term "thermal barrier coating" being given the broadest reasonable interpretation notwithstanding such term having a well-understood meaning in the art. As previously discussed, a "thermal barrier coating", as known in the art, is a continuous coating over the surface of a component which has thermal insulating and structural properties that provide for protection of the underlying component at high temperatures, typically in gas turbine engines which experience very high temperatures, and typically at temperatures greater than 1000 °C, over extended periods of time, typically several thousand hours. In this regard, the Examiner was previously provided with extracts taken from publications from the relevant field of art, which clearly evidence that the term thermal barrier coating (TBC) has a clear and well-understood meaning. These extracts were provided as a small, representative sample from a very large number of publications which all provide the same teaching as to the meaning of the term thermal barrier coating.

In order to obviate the rejections, the Examiner, during a telephone call, suggested amending the claims to include the functional description of what a thermal barrier does, and particularly the relationship between the article and the environment from which it is being protected, that is provided in the specification. To that end, the independent claims have been amended to positively set forth that the "thermal barrier coating" has "sufficient thickness and thermal and structural properties as to form an effective barrier between the one or more components and an extreme environment such as an interior of a gas turbine engine". Support for the amendments can be found on page 1 at lines 3-13 and on page 2 at lines 4-10.

As previously pointed out, the phosphor coating (40) of Wickersheim is quite simply not a thermal barrier coating. Wickersheim discloses (column 7, lines 61 to 68) that the phosphor of the phosphor coating (40) is applied as a paint to the solid object (20). Such a painted phosphor is a coating, but manifestly not a thermal barrier coating.

In order to highlight the manifest dissimilarity between a phosphor paint coating and a thermal barrier coating, the Examiner has been shown actual samples that contrast the performance in a thermal environment of a simple, phosphor paint coating and a thermal barrier coating in accordance with the present invention.

Accordingly, and in view of the amendments made to the independent claims, it is submitted that the claimed invention is clearly patentable over the disclosures of Wickersheim.

Likewise, the amended claims are patentable over Allison et al. Allison et al. has nothing to do with a thermal barrier coating as such term is known to those skilled in the relevant art or as set forth in the amended claims. Allison et al. makes no disclosure or suggestion of a thermal barrier coating.

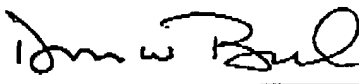
During a telephone conference on March 14, 2005, the Examiner indicated the above amendments would overcome the prior art rejections. The Examiner also brought to the undersigned's attention U.S. Patent No. 6,730,918 which was uncovered during an update search. It was noted that the subject patent does not qualify as prior art because its filing date is after the filing date of the international application upon which the present application is based, which in turn claims priority of two earlier applications.

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

In closing, the undersigned again wants to thank the Examiner for her cooperation and assistance in bringing this application to a close.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

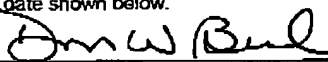
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Date: March 14, 2005


Don W. Bulson

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